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**AMBS**  
**alumni news**

## "HOLY LISTENING" TO OTHERS

### MY JOURNEY INTO SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

**Mary Etta King, MACF 2006**

**B**arry leaned forward and asked if I sensed an invitation to spiritual direction training. Would I be ready, he wondered? He was one of my teachers at Kairos: School of Spiritual Formation. On this particular day as we sat together in a direction session he told me he saw a gift in me for this type of work. I recognized it too. For as long as I can remember, I longed for a deeper relationship with God. Prayer opens my heart in a mystical way that is hard to explain. Kairos helped me learn the practices that foster prayer and being with God. In 1994 it was there in the halls of the Jesuit Center in Wernersville, Pa., that I experienced a deeper form of prayer

through silence and solitude. Soon after that I began spiritual direction training, a form of 'holy listening' to others. As I sit with directees giving attention to God's movements in their lives, I am reminded to pray regularly for them as they go about their daily lives. Spiritual direction helps to keep us focused on God. I am grateful for my spiritual director who has listened to my heart's cry over the past fifteen years or so guiding me and discerning with me the paths that lie ahead.

*Mary Etta King is executive director at Kairos: School of Spiritual Formation, Lancaster, Pa.*

**continued on page 2**

The AMBS community has said good-bye this season to long-time faculty and staff members who have retired. They will be missed on campus. This issue also honors the memory of long-time professor C.J. Dyck and his many contributions to the seminary and students.

AMBS has also provided a welcome to many. New staff members are hired. Community leaders speak of difficulties in Elkhart living. Pastors return during January's snowstorm to be refreshed by fellowship with old friends and presentations by new faculty members. Alumni in Pennsylvania gather for support.

*Life is good-bye ... Life is hello ... Life is also holy listening. ●*

— Rhoda Schrag,  
Alumni Association president



Mary E. Klassen

**M**artin Luther King Jr. Day brought together leaders from organizations and congregations to examine issues of racism, violence and poverty. Presenters included Giberto Pérez Jr., member of the AMBS board and faculty member at Goshen College; Apostle Willie Coates Jr., community organizer in South Bend, Ind.; Nekeisha Alexis-Baker, chair of the AMBS Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism Committee; Laurence Giden, AMBS student; and Rev. Jennifer Tinsley, pastor of St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church in Elkhart.

A recording of the panel presentations and discussion is available on AMBS's iTunesU channel: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/martin-luther-king-day-2014/id806218039> ●

# "HOLY LISTENING" TO OTHERS (continued)

## MINISTRY THROUGH SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Charlene Epp, MDiv 1999

**T**here are many gifts for which to be thankful. One such gift is to have been raised in a family and community immersed in a living faith in Christ and as followers of Jesus. Spiritual disciplines such as morning devotions and evening prayers were daily rhythms.

Being a follower of Jesus and incorporating daily spiritual disciplines into my life was and remains a conscious choice. Even so, as a young adult I found myself in a quandary of how God was at work in my life in the midst of particular circumstances. At the time, I turned to a spiritual director for spiritual support. That experience has led me to utilize spiritual direction as needed throughout nearly three decades when matters pertinent to my spirit called for attention.

Those women and men who have walked with me in this role have exercised a unique quality of deep listening which created a sacred space for the voice of God to be heard through my soul. They had the ability to provide holy listening, regardless of their own faith affiliation or religious practices or theological premises. Their own spiritual walk may have differed considerably from mine, yet they were present to me in a manner that allowed an awareness of God's guidance for and presence with me to surface. It deepened and strengthened my own faith walk.

Having the valuable experience of such a spiritual companion led me to be open

to training for and serving as a spiritual director for others. Whether with a group or individuals, the spiritual discipline of deep listening to another has culled from within the theological practice of allowing God to be God and the Mystery of the Holy Spirit at work to remain what it is: a mystery. Deep listening requires setting aside one's own agenda and becoming a vessel of the Holy Spirit's message and presence to another. Inevitably when this happens, both "director" and "directed" are changed by the encounter.

Ministering through spiritual direction gives opportunity for meeting those who have a wide array of life choices and experiences. In each meeting there is a bringing together, by God, of individuals whose converging spiritual journeys offer spiritual healing for specific individuals, and, therefore, our world. Such transformative experiences are a testimony of the Living Christ moving in our midst—and sometimes with the most "unlikely" people. Yet, if these people have experienced "healing" of a spiritual nature, no matter what their daily spiritual disciplines include, or how they may spend their Sunday mornings, they can move into the world as agents of the Living Christ to those they encounter. ●

*In addition to being a spiritual director, Charlene Epp is chaplain at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center in Portland, Ore.*

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AMBS

Follow AMBS on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/followAMBS](http://www.facebook.com/followAMBS)

(Click "Like" next to our name so you can get regular updates.)

Subscribe to the AMBS calendar to get notices of new events:

[www.ambs.edu/news-events/calendar/10147](http://www.ambs.edu/news-events/calendar/10147)

Listen to Pastors Week recordings of the "Fab Five" (AMBS's newest professors) on AMBS's iTunes U channel:

[www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm)

## FAREWELLS

**O**ur learning community is saying farewell to several members who have made significant contributions.

**Judy Yoder** retired from AMBS in December after 24 and a half years. She had been receptionist most of that time and also served as housing director.

**Carol Helmuth**, food services manager, was on medical leave during the fall. Now, because the seminary food services ended in January, she also is leaving AMBS. She had fed us healthy, nutritious, delightful meals since 1995.

**Lane Miller (MDiv 2013)** also ended his work with AMBS; he had filled in as cook since the beginning of this school year.

### SEND RETIREMENT GREETINGS

**Gayle Gerber Koontz** and **Ted Koontz**



will be honored as they retire at the end of this school year.

Gayle has taught theology since 1982, served as dean for five years and as acting president for several months. Ted has taught peace studies and ethics since 1982.

We invite you to send words of greeting and thanks as one way to recognize their contributions to the seminary and the church. Please send separate messages for Gayle and for Ted. Send them to Stephanie Coleman, [scoleman@ambs.edu](mailto:scoleman@ambs.edu), no later than April 15. ●



Jason Bryant

**A**MBS's "Fab Five"—Allan Rudy-Froese, Rachel Miller Jacobs, Jamie Pitts, Safwat Marzouk and Andy Brubacher Kaethler—were the presenters at Pastors Week, January 27–30. In spite of snowstorms and frigid temperatures, 157 people gathered for the week of asking, "Help me see Jesus! Help me see, Jesus!"

The event is as close as AMBS comes to an alumni reunion, and it also is a time for newcomers to get acquainted with the seminary. For example, Henry Kliewer (MDiv 1994), area church minister for Mennonite Church Manitoba, brought with him five pastors from Manitoba to experience AMBS for the first time.

Recordings of presentations and sermons from Pastors Week are available on AMBS's iTunes U channel: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/pastors-week-2014/id811524173?mt=10> ●

# ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

**Tom Boutell (MDiv 2010)** joined the Alumni Executive Committee, filling the unexpired term of **Martha Beals (MDiv 2008)**.

**Anita Mast Christian (MDiv 2006)** was ordained Nov. 17, 2013, at Community Church of the Brethren Hutchinson, Kan.

**Christine Guth (MDiv 2007)** received the Christian Service Award from Bethesda Lutheran Communities for her work as program director for Anabaptist Disability Network (ADNet).

**Rod Miller (MDiv 2013)** is interim pastor at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

**Mark Regier (former student)** was appointed to the board of directors of US SIF: The Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment. He serves as director of stewardship investing for

Praxis Mutual Funds and Everence Financial.

**Frances Ringenberg (MDiv 2008)** was ordained at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Nov. 24, 2013.

**Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg (MDiv 2012)** is a member of the pastoral team at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

**Sarah Thompson (MDiv 2011)** has been named executive director of Christian Peacemaker Teams.

## DEATHS

**David Winter (former student)** died September 15, 2013, in Winnipeg, Man.

**John Lenshyn (MDiv 1978)** died Oct. 4, 2013, in Winnipeg, Man.

**Mel Funk (MBS graduate)** died Aug. 25, 2013, in Belchertown, Mass.

**Rudy Martens (MDiv 1975)** died Oct. 18, 2013, in Goshen, Ind.

**Barbara Peterson**, fabric artist who occasionally taught at AMBS and created several pieces of art for the seminary, died Nov. 3 in Elkhart.

**Paul M. Lederach (BTh 1946)** died Jan. 6, in Lansdale,

Pa. He was a pastor, bishop, overseer, theologian, writer and teacher, and he served as editor for Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa. A gift from Paul Lederach and Mary Lederach (who survives him) funded a Preaching Lectureship at AMBS, enriching opportunities to teach and develop preaching. ●



At the Franconia Mennonite Conference Pastor Appreciation Dinner in December, AMBS alumni gathered for a photo: Front row: Mary Nitzsche, Sharon K. Williams (MDiv 1986), Martha Kolb-Wyckoff (MDiv 1985), Samantha Lioi (MDiv 2010), Jenifer Erickson Morales (MDiv 2007). Back row: Wayne Nitzsche (MDiv 1986), Wayne Speigle, Roy Bender (MDiv 1987), Noah Kolb, Jim Lapp (BD 1963), Firman Gingerich (MDiv 1984).

## IN MEMORIAM

**C.** J. Dyck, professor emeritus of Anabaptist and Sixteenth-century Studies, died Jan. 10 in Normal, Ill. For 35 years he worked in administration at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Ill., and as a faculty member of AMBS. In addition, he made significant contributions in the General Conference Mennonite Church, through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and in Mennonite World Conference.

C.J. joined the faculty of AMBS in 1959 and retired in 1989. He was loved for the content in his courses and for the way in which he taught.

Ted Koontz, professor of peace studies and ethics, said, "C.J. was passionate about keeping alive and lively the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition. He was a churchman par excellence."

Jacob Elias, professor emeritus of New Testament, said, "I had deep respect for the wisdom and wit with which he approached his teaching, scholarship and active involvement in the mission of the church, both Mennonite and beyond."

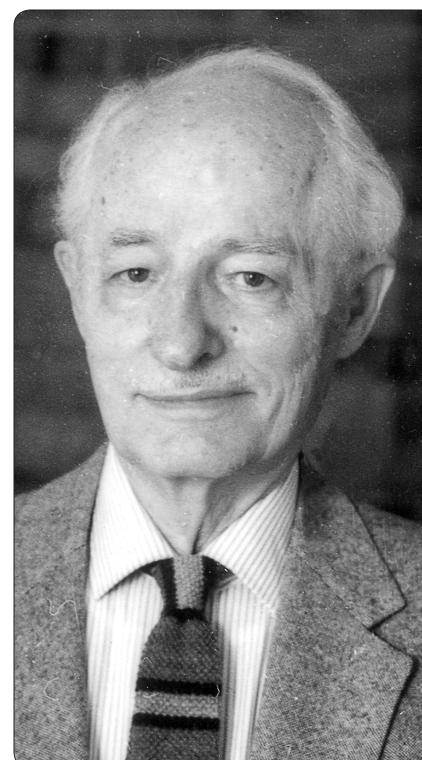
Ben Ollenburger, professor of biblical theology, remembers C.J.'s warm welcome when he joined the faculty, adding, "We taught in different departments and were separated in age by three decades, but C.J. was a beloved colleague, a reservoir of wisdom, and an inexhaustible source of stories and anecdotes, from his own life and from Mennonite history."

C.J. served as director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies for 21 years. In this role, he facilitated approximately 50 publications.

C.J.'s own publications include *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, which is still used as a textbook in many Mennonite schools. He also was editor of *Mennonite Encyclopedia Vol. V*.

"C.J. had an original vision for a structure that would promote research and publication in Anabaptism and Mennonitism. Under his leadership the Institute of Mennonite Studies flourished and became a model for other schools," John Rempel, director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre and former AMBS faculty member, said.

For a full story of C.J.'s many contributions to AMBS and to the church both globally and in Elkhart, visit the AMBS website: [www.ambs.edu/news/CJ-Dyck-professor-emeritus-died-Jan-10.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/news/CJ-Dyck-professor-emeritus-died-Jan-10.cfm) ●



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A seminary of  
Mennonite Church USA and  
Mennonite Church Canada

## AMBS NOTES

### Extension site to close

AMBS-Great Plains, the extension site in central Kansas, will close at the end of this school year. AMBS is now considering how to continue offering courses and workshops in the area. **Dorothy Nickel Friesen (former associate dean)** is serving as interim director this year. **Lois Barrett (MDiv 1983)** served as director from 2002 to 2013 and continues as a member of the AMBS teaching faculty.

### Conference call for papers

AMBS will host Rooted and Grounded: A Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship, Sept. 18–20. Planners have issued a call for papers to pastors, scholars and creation care advocates. Proposals are due June 1. Read the call for papers: [www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded](http://www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded)

### Upcoming lectureships

**Mark S. Smith, PhD**, Theological Lectureship, March 19–20.

**Greg Boyd, PhD**, Theological Center Guest, April 24–25. He will do a public lecture Thursday evening, April 24. Visit [www.ambs.edu/gregboyd](http://www.ambs.edu/gregboyd) for details.

### Two new faculty members

**Malinda Berry, PhD (MAPS 2000)**, will join the faculty this summer, teaching theology and ethics. She now is assistant professor of theological studies and director of the MA program at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.



**Janna Hunter-Bowman (MAPS 2012)** will join the faculty in summer 2015, teaching peace studies and social ethics. She is completing a PhD program at the University of Notre Dame.

